

STATE OF CALIFORNIA SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY - RECOMMENDATION

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)

Subregion: NORTH-CENTRAL **County:** BUTTE/TEHAMA

Applicant: NORTHERN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL LAND TRUST

Project Title: TUSCAN HEADWATERS PROJECT

Application Number: SNC 070354

PROJECT SCOPE

This project will provide for facilitation of coordinated outreach to local watershed conservation groups in Butte and Tehama Counties with the intention of increasing stakeholder awareness and permanent protection of lands within the upper reaches of 10 prominent creeks contained within the Tehama Land Formation.

There are eight watershed groups that currently monitor water quality and organize stakeholders within the Tuscan Region. These watershed groups will help to increase the protection of priority properties through conservation easements with private landowners. SNC funding under this grant does not include direct acquisition funding, but will increase capacity of the NCRLT and local watershed conservancies to complete priority easement and/or acquisition projects in the future.

Specific deliverables include:

- Develop outreach materials for mailing and presentations targeting approximately 1,000 landowners;
- Construct geo-database using GIS;
- Conduct outreach through direct mailing, presentations and site-visits;
- Evaluate submitted project applications;
- Develop approximately 10 prospects for possible conservation easement acquisition.

RECOMMENDATION

SNC Staff recommendation is to fund at the requested level of \$146,640. This project would provide for expanded capacity of the watershed groups and the NCRLT. The outreach and education of landowners on the importance of protection of watershed values is beneficial to at least 10 watersheds within the two counties.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy
Cherokee Watershed Alliance
Deer Creek Watershed Conservancy
Little Chico Creek Watershed Group
Lower Feather River/Honcut Creek Watershed Group

Tehama County Resource Conservation District

PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Develop Landowner Outreach Materials	August 1 – December 2008
Conduct Initial Landowner Outreach	January – April 2009
Progress Report	March 2009
Evaluate Initial Group of Land Protection Applications	May – August 2009
Rank Applications and Approve Potential Projects	December 2009
Progress Report	October 2009
Continue Evaluation of Applications and Present to Lands Committee	Quarterly
Develop Final Easement Acquisition Projects	September 2009 – March 2010
Submit Application for Funding	November 2009- March 2010
FINAL REPORT	April 1, 2010

PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Contract for completion of outreach materials, GIS data base development and presentations	\$64,515
Develop Prospects and apply for CE Acquisition Funding	\$29,645
Materials, Supplies and postage NCRLT	\$5,462
Travel for Executive Director NCRLT	\$2,020
Coordination for watershed groups (8)	\$19,818
Materials and Supplies/Postage for watershed groups(8)	\$25,180
GRAND TOTAL	\$146,640



2.0 Project Summary

The Northern California Regional Land Trust (NCRLT) is requesting **\$146,640** over two years to conduct coordinated outreach with collaborating, local watershed conservation groups in Butte and Tehama counties. Anticipated results include significantly increased stakeholder awareness and the permanent protection of private lands within the upper reaches and areas adjacent to the headwaters of ten prominent creeks contained within the Tehama Land Formation. These creeks include Battle Creek, Paynes Creek, Antelope Creek, Mill Creek, Deer Creek, Pine Creek, Big Chico Creek, Little Chico Creek, Cherokee watershed, Butte Creek, and Lower Feather/Honcut Creek (please see figure).

We are not requesting direct acquisition funding in this proposal. Instead, Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) funding will increase the capacity of NCRLT and several cooperating watershed groups to promote and facilitate watershed conservation and the protection of priority properties through conservation easements. Upper reach and headwater properties are crucial to the integrity of the Tuscan region due to their ecological and hydrological values. Private lands in this region are invaluable for the connectivity and linkages they provide to the landscape. In coordination with watershed groups and government agencies, this project will further both NCRLT's *Wildland Protection Program*, and regional land conservation priorities that include riparian and montane landscapes at the higher elevations.

Several watershed groups currently monitor water quality and organize stakeholders within the Tuscan region. These include the Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy, Tehama County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD), Mill Creek Conservancy, Deer Creek Watershed Conservancy, Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance, Little Chico Creek Watershed Alliance, Cherokee Watershed Alliance, Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy, and the Lower Feather River/Honcut Creek Watershed Group. These organizations, typically with very little funding and/or resources, actively promote watershed-based restoration, invasive species removal, and advocacy through community participation and collaboration. SNC funding will significantly increase these groups current ability to promote conservation in their respective watersheds. More importantly, capacity funding will help move these organizations towards becoming more viable and self-sustaining into the future.

The Tuscan Headwaters Project will also significantly increase NCRLT's capacity to engage stakeholders in the upper reaches of ten prominent creeks, and facilitate the permanent protection of key watershed properties. Permanently protecting private lands within the upper reaches and areas adjacent to the headwaters of these creeks will help ensure that water quality remains high for fish and wildlife resources, recreation, agriculture, and the recharge of the Tuscan Aquifer.

Capacity funding from SNC will enable NCRLT and several watershed partners to make significant contributions to SNC's program areas by improving watershed health, conducting environmental and natural resource education and enhancing water quality monitoring efforts. Additionally, the protection of these creeks would benefit a number of important natural resources, including, but not limited to, the Tuscan Aquifer and several federal and state endangered and threatened species including several runs of Chinook salmon, and Central Valley Steelhead.